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REBEL DESTINY

764 [539] "On the sacred apinti drum we speak to the spirit; we tell it we go to dig the grave." So the drum spoke. From the shore we could see five figures in the small corial, and, as they came closer, we saw also the drum, the food the men carried, and the muddy hoe. They would do this the next day and the next, for to dig a grave takes a long time.

I

765 769 191 Although separated by many generations from their African places of origin, the Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana have held to the traditions and beliefs of their aboriginal home. In the Suriname bush, as in Africa, the responsibility which an individual bears toward his social group does not end with death. His clan, his village, and his family look to him, when he has joined the spirits of his ancestors, to protect them against the magic of their enemies, to help them in time of drought or pestilence, and at all times to intercede for them with the gods.

As in Africa, the spirit of the dead is powerful for good or evil, and the rites of death must be carried out as tradition demands, so that the dead man may feel he has received honor among the living and proper introduction to the world of the dead. As in Africa, we found that the 764 191 first care for the dead is to place the body on the central portion of a broken canoe; that rum and tobacco are included in the water with which the body is washed; that in washing the dead, the back must not be touched; that the number of those who wash the body must not be [801] an even one—five is the number preferred, though three persons are used, and seven; that those chosen must not be young, for it takes age and the knowledge of controlling the spirits which age brings to approach the dead without suffering harm.

764 While the body lies in the open house of the dead, relatives and the village elders are in attendance on the spirit night and day. It is they who all night tell stories about the trickster, spider Anansi, to amuse the spirit, and they who play traditional games. The dances begin when

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of him from whom it had dropped. The same belief in the identification of the essence of one's being with any part of one's body which actuates so many primitive peoples, and is so characteristic of West Africa, exists among the Bush Negroes. It is for this reason that when an African or a Bush Negro dies away from home some of his hair and nail parings are sent to his native village for ceremonial burial. And it is for this reason, too, that for three mornings we saw the party of five young men go out from Gankwe to dig the grave of Sedefo's brother and heard the drum's invocation,

Osio tintin
Osio be'e dyo.

2

The night was still and dark. The natives said the moon was dead and this was the time for the dances to the river gods, but since there was a death in Gankwe all the gods might be danced to, for in times of important rituals, like death or the breaking of mourning or harvest festivals, it was not necessary to wait for the day sacred to each god to dance.

"They dance well at Gankwe," said our informant, as he sat by, and then after listening for a few moments he added, "They're dancing already."

We, too, walked out on the path to listen, and gradually we separated the sound of the falls above our camp from what seemed like the pulse of the night itself.

"It doesn't boom, does it?" we asked each other, remembering the accounts of impressionable travelers.

Soon Sedefo himself appeared and another, and we started for Gankwe.

"*Waka koni*, Sedefo," called our host at camp as we put off. He was evidently uneasy about us and asked the paddlers to be careful, for it is not safe on the river at night with the rapids below and the spirits that hover about.

The paddles cut the water so soundlessly that it did seem as if the spirits were carrying the boat downstream.

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609 people kept their distance, and among them some pithy proverbs were spoken to bear upon the shortcomings of the white man. One or two of them turned to repeat to the dead what had been said, and there was great laughter. Sedefó came to assure us that the dead man liked it very much. For the dead, it appeared, were especially susceptible to humor and to exceptional occasions.

764 292 About us, or edging their way toward us, were the younger men in their ceremonial dress, the toga-like cloth covering their bodies, but leaving one shoulder bared for respect, and the women in their knee-length *pangi*, or cloths, hanging from the waist, and their shining brass rings reaching from wrist to elbow and from ankle halfway up to the knee. Among the dancers, but standing somewhat aloof, could be seen a man or woman with seed rattles about the ankles. These were the fine dancers. Of them our informant had spoken when he said, "They dance well at Gankwe."

764 359 533 Carved stools were placed for us facing the coffin a little to the left of the singers, where we could best see the dancing. One or two lanterns were moved to give us better light. The drummers, who had not left their places, took up the rhythm again—one of the women had us know that the spirit of the dead man had communicated to the spirits of the drummers that he wanted to see the dancing resumed. The singing began—a woman's falsetto voice and a chorus; the hand clapping of the singers and bystanders emphasized the basic rhythm. It was slow at first, then quickened, and the dancing became more animated.

"They dance seketi," whispered our friends. "Later they will dance awasa."

764 535 The dancing was confined to a comparatively small space. It began with a barely perceptible motion of the feet of the dancers to the rhythm of the drums and the hand clapping. Then the feet began to execute figures in place, without leaving the ground, the arms hanging loosely at the side. This was continued for some time, until, arms flexed and held rigid at the elbow, and knees bent but rigid, too, the

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764 535 gratulate the dancer, while another had taken her place in the dance, only to be brought to herself again when her dancing had become so abandoned that there was danger of falling or tripping. For it is always a bad thing for one's [714] *akra*—soul—to fall from exhaustion or even to trip while dancing, and it would have been especially dangerous to have fallen with the spirit of the dead so close.

As time passed, figures were seen edging away into the darkness. The knot of dancers thinned. Now there were [242] but two young women dancing. They wore identical cloths of a new material, a pattern resembling the cloth over the coffin. They were related to the dead man. When all were wearied, they had to go on dancing. . . . Dawn would not be long in coming.

3

764 775 761 We knew that it would not be long before the spirit of the dead would be called upon to tell his family, fellow villagers, and clansmen how death had come upon him. For, in the Guiana bush, except for the very old, there is little natural dying. The deceased has been killed either by the gods whom he has offended or by the black magic of a powerful enemy, and it is of this which he must tell before his burial. When Sedefo came to our camp the next afternoon, we asked him about the "carrying of the corpse," as the ceremony is called. We told him that his people in Africa—for the Bush Negroes know that their origins are African—also asked the spirit of the dead why death had come upon him, and we plied him with questions. What would they do to be sure the answer was right? Who would ask the questions? When would they establish the facts of the killing? And might we come and see?

There would be no trouble, he told us amiably enough. The spirits of the dead liked attention, and for the *Bakra*—the white man—to come so often to his brother's bier was a compliment. We could return with him, but we must make haste—and it was evident that important ceremonies were about to take place.

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Ah, but they knew each other.

Bayo began paddling faster to keep up with him.

"There is to be a council meeting at Gankwe. I had to hurry away last night, and I must get back there in time. We must have permission from the spirit of the dead man to go back to work, and Sedefo has to find out if he can start up the river, and if he does go, we must all pray to the ancestors because four men will be going from Gankwe, and the *Gran Sembe*—the village elders—have things to decide . . . "

Now, fearing that he might have said too much, he doubled his speed, and Bayo understood that the other preferred to be alone. They belonged to different clans, Bayo to the same as the headman of the tribe, and the Gankwe people to another. Gankwe was sending important men to take the Bakra up the river. The chief's own brother, Asikanu, was to go, although it was said he was being sent out of the way while his adultery case was being settled. There had been talk about this case up and down the river. The Gankwe clan head had given a chief's sanctuary to the offender because he was his own brother, people said. Well, if the injured husband committed suicide as he threatened, and sent a kunu to the family of the brother, and even the village and clan, it would be an ugly thing. But so it was with trouble about women. It was as they said,

"Sleep is death
Woman kills man."

He half chanted the proverb and smiled, for he looked forward to his trip up the river with an eye to a visit in Lamé, where the women knew how to love. And he began singing the seketi song which he liked so well. Both the melody and the words were old, but he sang the refrain as if it were quite his own—whatever hardships there were on the river, at Lamé one slept with the women!

At the village of Akunkun an old man and a boy of about nine were at the landing place ready to start. Bayo

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KUNU

"*Na wa' taki: Efi gbuli wolo, i sa si san de na ini.*—It is said: If a person stirs up a hole, he will find what is in it."

And so it was that very night, when we were camped on an island near the great falls, with the roar of the water sounding in our ears like the very signal drums we were told the river gods wanted sounded that the sun might come and warm and dry them after the long rains, that we learned more. Kasanya, the captain of the fourth boat, had conducted himself so unobtrusively that we barely knew he was there. He was almost as old as Bibifo, but strangely silent. He was tall and spare, with graying hair, and eyes that were rimmed with red. We had not sought him out particularly to make conversation with him because he had ugly, open sores on his body, the result of a virulent case of bush yaws, which showed when he sat paddling in his loin cloth. We had known him during our first year when he had been more willing to be friendly, more ready to talk. From him, in fact, we had learned to play one of the Bush Negro games that the ancestors had brought from Africa.

Kasanya came over to ask us whether we had medicine for him. His head ached so until . . . he could barely see. There is that about white man's medicine in the bush, it is to be had free, and there is no harm in trying it.

"Will you make us a game board like the one we bought from your village last year, Kasanya?" we asked him.

"Yes, but you must have two of them, one flat and one curved like a boat. It is not good to have only one. When a man is alive he plays the game. When he dies and comes back to visit the living, he wants to play, too. Now if there is a board for him, he will play on that. But if there is but the one, he will play with the living and that is not good."

"You know a great deal, Kasanya."

"Awa, yes, but I'm an old man already. I've had much trouble. Last year after you left the third son I made died. Now I have no one. Kunu has taken the three of them, and my wife is asleep, too."

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"I'll tell you how it is mostly," he went on, after a silence. "Sometimes a woman will lie about the father of her child. The child will grow up keeping the trefu of a strange man. But it won't be his real trefu. His mother, you see, lied about his father. In the end, if nothing is done, this child will be sick, and later he will become a leper. Only a bad woman will lie about her child's father, because only a bad woman will want to hurt her own child. It doesn't happen among the girls who wear kerchiefs and live the way the old people live. These girls dance to the spirits. They are afraid of their *akra*—their soul—and the Earth Mother. But those girls who wear hats—ai, Massa, those girls do anything!"

But here in the bush, it seemed, they had other beliefs about leprosy, he went on. Here they believed it was a kind of a spirit, too. When a leper died he was not given a good burial. No wakes were held for him. He was given no coffin. He was buried in the Bad Bush, where the sorcerers were thrown.

"When a leper dies, they don't want him to come back again. They don't treat his spirit well. They do the same with him as with a madman. They bury him with no more ceremony than a child, who came on earth, and would not stay. They say it's all because of a bad spirit, and they don't want bad spirits on earth."

4

"Why do we plant away from the village?"

It was the old woman talking, as we sat and smoked with her. The moon had come up above the maripa palm trees behind the house where the leper had been helped into his hammock, and it was pleasant out-of-doors.

"Why, you ask? Well, sometimes when the bush is burned, a wind comes up suddenly, and sends the flames, down, down, beyond the cleared ground. How would it be with a village, if we cleared our grounds too close to it, and this happened? No, Bak'a, we people of the bush know better. . . . What do you say? Why do we do our clearing

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768 "If it is the man who is dead, then the woman takes her
775 girl children to live with her, but her sons she sends away to live elsewhere. A man's spirit will not harm his daughters. He loves them. But his sons, he will kill. . . . When a woman dies, then it is the sons that the man will keep with him in the house, and the daughters must go away. The yorka of a woman will protect her sons, but she will destroy the daughters when she visits the place where she once lived."

5

602 To her child the Bush Negro mother gives at birth
851 membership in all her own blood groups. The child is of her *wosu*, or household. He belongs to her *mbe*, or great family, which is an aggregate of many households. He is a member of her *lo*, or clan, which is composed of a number of great families, and which holds political sway over a given
613 portion of the land. The tie of all these groupings is a blood tie, a common female ancestress who lived long ago, or several women, daughters of the same mother, who had been the first to live with the runaway ancestors here in the bush, or several women who came from one people in Africa, and were the first to bear children to the rebels in the jungle. Every legal, every economic implication which this tradition of descent and inheritance through the female line might hold, is faithfully adhered to.

611 The mother does indeed count, as the tales told us in the
593 city insisted. But what of the father?

That the Bush Negro understands fully the rôle that
842 both father and mother play in the procreation of the
532 young was everywhere apparent. The wood carving which a father made for his young daughter had designs on it of the kind which bore the general designation "*womi ko' muye*—man and woman." Whatever the traceries on the carvings given by a man to his woman during courtship, or after marriage, whatever animals might be represented, the essential symbolism was that of fertility, and the

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774 at the time approaching a state of possession, had provoked great anger.

"If you do not know what the Dyo-dyo is, then you are not human. Then I won't talk to you. Have you never walked and felt something in back of you, yet nothing was there? Have you never had a dream?"

The Dyo-dyo was one of two souls with which each individual was born, the old woman had later been persuaded to explain, for each man had his akra, his personal soul, which if he were mindful of it, remained with him, and allowed no evil to come to him; and each man had his Dyo-dyo, his wandering soul. At death the soul which had [795] wandered came back to the body. If it were permitted to stray once more, this soul, which had been ever restless in life, would wander about troubling the living.

796 765 But now, sitting among the women in back of the Granman's shrine, it seemed again best to admit that she knew nothing of the adyo ceremony. Fortunately, there was no outburst of anger this time, for here in the true, true Saramacca country, it was soon evident that there was a [186] pride in their magic, and their language, because these were held to be uniquely their own.

"We give a big play for the breaking of mourning." All [534] the drums were played, and the rattles sounded, and the *kwakwa*—the hard-wood bench played with two sticks—was beaten.

[293] For this important ceremony, the oldest living brother of the dead man provided food and rum, and, when the time came to partake of this food, he and the *hei mundu*—the people of rank—sat about the doorway of the widow's house. She herself stood inside the house, behind the threshold, scattering food for the dead, and pouring rum on the [262] ground. Rice and peanuts and sugar cane were thrown away, but not yams or plantains, for those things were not given in their village to the ancestral spirits. As the widow "threw away" the food she wept. In the clearing those who did not [illegible] danced adyo. In a circle, men and women danced in close file, one behind the other, each

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765 And Fenekonde said, "Mourning is hard. The widow must not go to the river alone to wash. Other women must take her there. Her husband's spirit might seize her. Her [005] hair must be cut. If not, he will get her by the hair. Her clothes must be ugly. She must keep herself unclean, so that his ghost will not long for her when he sees her."

But mourning was difficult not only for a woman. A man's mourning period was no less burdensome, they added. He too wore old clothes. When he went to wash, his wife's brother took him to the river. If he had another wife, he did not go into the hammock with her, for the dead woman would be envious and would kill him.

765 843 There were times, however, when women did not go into mourning for their husbands. If a woman carried a child in her womb, then she did not put on mourning clothes at all. She did not weep, she was not allowed to show any grief. That same night the dead man's oldest living brother would come with her in the hammock. If there were no brother, another man would come, for some man had to come.

"He must come. It cannot be otherwise. She cannot go to her hammock alone. So it is every night when a woman carries a child in her womb. A man must be with her, for the sake of the child."

3

243 644 [A15] In the clearing the widow stood stamping rice. About her the rice hulls flew and made a half circle of gold at her dark feet. Her mortar, which was made of a hollowed-out log, like a drum, was large and reached almost to her hips. On the ground was a large tray which she used for winnowing the rice. With slow, regular beats she lifted and dropped [A12] the pestle, and as her body swung with its slow motion the [85A] head of the sleeping child on her back rolled this way and that.

768 244 Her two small boys had gone to live in her mother's village, but this girl child remained with her. She was born

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000 "About half of them, I guess," he said.

5

524 609 When we returned to camp, Kasanya waited for us. He had come with the game boards he had promised to make for us, the adji game which was played in the house of death, and which the fine carver in Kasanya's village could not make because he was young, and a man needed to have a wife under the sod before he was fitted to make it.

Kasanya had taught the white man to play the game the year before, and though the white man had had much practice in playing it at home, Kasanya won one game after the other with ease.

524 609 562 With the white woman he would not play, nor would any other man—not even Bayo who showed so much indulgence toward the strangers. It was this way, Kasanya explained. A man knew that a woman could not beat him at the game, much less a woman who did not have the cunning of their bush, and would not, therefore, be expected to excel in what pertained to the life of the bush. But if the gods became capricious and allowed the white woman to win, then it would be more than a man could bear to be twitted up and down the river about it. Songs would be made up about it, and stories and proverbs. Master Nigger! A man would be a fool to risk it.

524 When Kasanya had gone, Bayo came back from Gankwe where, it seemed, his errands now took him daily. The sun was still high enough so that a game might be played before the hovering ghosts who in life had enjoyed the game would take their places beside the players, and play unseen at this game board with the living. [MS]

"Do you play adji, Bayo?"

"*Awa! Suma no de!*—Sure! No one better!"

But it soon appeared that Bayo had brought too much self-confidence with him from Gankwe. He was promptly beaten, and beaten again.

"*Suma de, Bayo?*—Someone better?"

The boy grinned. "*Suma de, ai,*" he acknowledged.

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This, he went on to explain, had the meaning that obia was not so great as the very great gods, and it was not to be ranked with the lesser deities who served as emissaries for the great gods, yet when the great gods wanted to help mankind, it was through obia that they healed and purified, it was to obia that men were instructed to turn.

It seems that when the Sky God created the Earth Mother and the Mother of the River, he also created man and beast. Man had a poor time of it, pitting himself against the forces of earth and sky and water. And so that man might survive, the Sky God had had to send obia into the world to help man. Obia was not a god, it was a spirit. It gave people knowledge of herbs which cured, and herbs which prevented sickness. Obia warned of danger, and made known those properties of earth and water and air which healed and calmed. Obia taught the use of the band of metal on the arm, or the string about the waist which forewarned of evil, and made man wary and alert.

After obia came into the world, the Sky God sent Akantamasu, the god of the ant hill, to plague man. Perhaps obia had made of man an overbearing creature, defiant even against the great gods, so that the Sky God brought the Akantamasu spirit into being to teach him humility.

The answer of the Bush Negro was, of course, that so it was, and so it had been long ago, but why, he did not know. The Sky God had willed it so, and the Sky God was so far from man that he never vouchsafed explanations to human beings, and they in turn rarely taxed him to ease their bewilderment.

There was also the power of the ancestors, but our Bush Negro friends were never certain as to how they ranked in the supernatural hierarchy. Some said they ranked after the Earth Mother and the Mother of the River, that they were greater than obia, because the ancestors punished as well as helped mankind, and when angered their punishment came swifter than that of the powerful Akantamasu gods. Others said the ancestors were greater than obia, because obia had been given to the ancestors long ago,

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and it was they who in dream or vision, or in a state of possession, instructed living men in the ways of yet greater and greater obia. But there were those who held that obia ranked after the greatest of the deities, that obia surpassed the power of the ancestors, for obia knew how to make "*yorka tapu*"—preventives against troublesome ghosts, and obia men could summon the dead to enter the body of a living man to make revelations.

Whatever the position of obia in the supernatural world, its place on earth was to serve man, for of all living beings, man alone knew obia.

2

What were the manifestations of obia in the life of the Bush Negro as we found them?

A black pot with its magic powers was an obia pot, the charm worn about the neck was called an obia, the medicines we gave the natives for their eyes or their cuts were called white man's obia, and their own mixture of weeds steeped in water, which stood in the burning sun gathering a green scum until it should be ready for use, was also obia. Young Yamati who had danced susa for us did not have a cord about his neck, but, he had assured us, he had obia for long life as did his partner Sabape, though his own could not be seen, since it consisted of several obia cuts made shortly after birth, which served instead of the cord. The strings about the waists of children were obias. The slight cuts to be noticed on men's arms, on thighs, below the knee, below the shoulder blades were obia cuts, too.

Nor was that all.

Bayo had said to us, "When obia comes a man does bad things. He destroys. When mine comes, it is ugly sometimes."

It was obia, too—Apanto's obia—which had stopped our phonograph, and obia again, invoked this time by Bayo, which had strengthened the spirit of the machine.

We talked about obia to an elder, a village head, from one of the down-river settlements, which was not, however,

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789 before the new moon comes, and when you do this, you
798 must say,
439

"*Obia-o,*
Your spirit must stay,
Your power must not leave this.
[539] *Do not go elsewhere,*
Do not become defiled."

789 There was the obia on which Bayo had lavished all the
798 magic he could command so that his friends might be safe in the bush. From the sacred grass known as *s'a*—the same grass from which the woven ceremonial dancing skirts are made here on the river—he made several long lengths of twine. These he wove into a square which later became the pendant of this neck obia. On this, as a base, he sewed two cowries facing each other, and in the middle of the fringed border of this pendant he fastened a bit of a macaw's feather, blue and orange in color.

The twisted cord about the neck had several knots in it where the cord met the pendant. Tying is the symbol of attaching, of binding, so that if an invocation was uttered in the making of these knots, and the twine was then drawn taut, the power was certain to be lodged inside the knots. Then, too, knots form links, and links, whether they be in a metal chain or in fiber or wood, symbolize union, and any object or ornament with links is, therefore, much valued in bush and in town. A linked chain is a favorite
• [515] gift to please the akra, the soul, among the coastal Negroes.
A woman who wishes to attach her man to her will rise at
[832] night noiselessly and will knot a hair from the man's head three times, speaking her invocation. In the bush few obias are found which do not have several knots in them.

In his exuberance Bayo placed so many prohibitions on this finely woven obia, that we asked him if he could not nullify some of them.

784 "For very strong obias, we have many tchina. It is best
787 so, because no one who wants to harm you will guess all of them and so succeed in robbing the obia of its power.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Other evil spirits are *Bakru*, *Yorkas* (a Carib word), *Aze-man*, and *Lybba*. The Bakru are very ugly. A Negro picked up a crying child and sat him on his shoulders. His companion noticed the child's eyes and said: "That is a Bakru." The Negro dashed the child down. The child was instantly transformed into an ape and said: "I missed you that time, but next time I'll get you." The Bakru may also take the form of little mannikins with large heads.

Yorkas are ghosts. They are very similar to our conception of haunting spooks. They may be the ghosts of dead people, more especially of dead enemies who have returned to do harm.

The Azeman are the most awful of all spirits. They leave their skins every night and travel about in the form of persons without any skin. Consequently they are an ugly, bleeding sight. At dawn they assume their covering. But if the skin is found and salt placed around it, it shrinks so that it becomes too small for the Azeman to get back into. This causes them to vanish. Another method of getting rid of the Azeman is to scatter rice about. They dislike rice very much and stop to pick the grains up out of the way. In their preoccupation they do not notice the coming of dawn, which is very harmful to them.

The Lybba are spirits or ghosts similar to the Yorka.

A sleeping Bush Negro must be waked with care, as his personal spirit, the soul, or kra, may not be able to get back in time if he is too suddenly aroused.

The Djukas may be possessed by almost any spirit. During

/13 cont./
796 (782) commited. This feast, at which pigs and poultry are sacrificed, must last for four weeks and thus ends with the following new moon. They pray, dancing and singing, while from time to time they kneel in order to ask for blessings.

[778] In the place where their idol stands they plant long sticks in the ground at certain intervals, on which they let flutter a number of long narrow strips of white cotton in the manner of flags.

[781] They celebrate this feast, for which no costs are spared, with all possible solemnity; it is attended by old and young and is very important among them.

Chapter IX

Conceptions about Death and Eternity

• 775 They believe that at death the existence of the human being ends, but that the spirit of the deceased does not disappear altogether and remains among them for a long time. Also they believe in unlucky spirits, which, as a result of an earlier evil life, must wander about restlessly, while the life on earth of the peaceful spirits is supposed to have been free of misdeeds.

They do not assume rewards in the hereafter for good deeds; /14/ misdeeds, however, in their opinion, are punished with restless wandering about.

[755] They say that those spirits know all that happens, and that they can come in contact with them at their feasts, that they receive many a hint and information, and through concealed signs come to know remedies against diseases, to which they attach the fullest confidence.

Chapter X

Marriage and Marital Life

584 Their marriages take place with few ceremonies. Frequently young men and even men ask pregnant women, in case they should bring a daughter into the world, to designate that girl as their wife,

/19 cont./

696 he must sit unbound on a large fire arranged in gridiron fashion,
682 so that he burns completely to ashes.

[695] Never, however, is an accused put to death before three months have elapsed after the inquiry, because there still might possibly be a chance that his innocence will be proved.

682 In the case of a confession and the supplying of clear proof
[695] that the deceased gave cause to be poisoned, the culprit frequently
[672] escapes with a light punishment; sometimes also forgiveness is granted with general approval, with the condition that the culprit take upon himself to the third generation the obligation to be of service in everything to the descendants of the maltreated person.

681 It may also happen that in the case of various other misdeeds the
672 perpetrator is completely forgiven for his misdeed, but that upon his descendants to the third generation there is imposed the obligation to render slave services exactly as in the case of poisoning.

681 The majority of these slave services ordinarily consist of giving money, strong drink, or the necessities of life, as a result of which hard work must often be done in order to be able to fulfill them. Every day they are afraid that this or that may be exacted from them. There are indications, however, that not too great a misuse is made of this.

765 Twelve months after the burial there always takes place a great gathering in the hut of the deceased, at which time the period of mourning ends with rejoicing. Exuberant festivities are then celebrated, and that night an unusually great amount is drunk, eaten, and honor salutes fired. Everyone in the vicinity, insofar as he is able, is present on this occasion.

This festival is called tesa, the ending of the mourning period, and begins after one of the nearest relatives, who enjoys the greatest respect, takes a large calabash filled with water in his right hand and with it slowly walks forth out of the hut along the other dwellings nearby and is followed by a large number of people, during which he here and there sprinkles the water,
[775] trowéwatra, in drops on the ground, saying: Like this water, the soul of the deceased will also be pure, and all that was dear to him will remain tranquilly on earth without being disturbed by him who as spirit finds himself in the spirit world.

/72 cont./

577 671 641 The morality of the Refugee Blacks knows in effect only obligations of a social and religious order. As for everything concerning material life, each one has the absolute right, one could even say the duty, to act as he sees fit, insofar as he does not wrong anyone else.

643 671 64 [156] If the grand man gave an order obliging someone to act against his own interest, for example if he wished to lower arbitrarily the price of boats, this order would be lawfully void. If the grand man has very great personal influence, he can persuade the Boni that it is to their interest to obey such a prescription, but in no case can his command have the effect of imposing by force an arbitrary order foreign to the social and religious tradition; the present grand man is weak in character to boot, sensitive to the influence of the Creoles and very little given to exerting any authority.

643 771 In reality, the office of grand man is above all religious. The grand man centralizes, if one may say so, the struggle against evil forces and watches ceaselessly over the welfare of the collectivity.

643 764 When a man dies, his near relatives come to report on the questioning of the yɔrka. Burial cannot take place until the grand man has made sure that all the prescriptions have been filled. People come to report to him again after the burial so that he can be sure that no suprahuman danger remains.

643 775 [782] The grand man has special power over the yɔrka (spirits) of the dead, which the beliefs of the Refugee Blacks place on a level intermediate between the human and the divine. When one of these yɔrka exerts against a lineage a vengeance (kunu) whose malignity goes beyond habitual bounds, the grand man beseeches it to stop; they allege that things go back to normal, at least for a time.

This power attributed to the grand man invests him, in the eyes of the Boni, with a suprahuman character. It is the very foundation of his political power.

/73 cont./

643 644 586 The present grand man, contrary to his predecessors, has only one wife. She is dressed like the other women and works at her clearing like everyone else. /74/ but her marriage to the grand man imposes special obligations on her: she can not divorce him; neither can he repudiate her.

643 829 The attitude of the Boni toward the grand man is a curious mixture of respect and disparagement. They regard him as the living symbol of their nation, and each one resents as if it were a personal insult an outsider having an incorrect attitude toward him. But their undisciplined spirit kicks up at the measures he is obliged to take to make them respect customary law, and even the authority of a poised and benevolent man like Grand Man Difu is not willingly accepted. As a matter of fact, the Boni stand for [154] [195] the authority of the grand man as they adhere to the worship of their gods, by the feeling of an absolute and inexorable necessity; in their minds the grand man is above all the priest of Odun; if the grand man were not there, they would be without defense against the wisiman, without recourse against the vengeance exercised by the yaka of the dead of other lineages.

The political power of the grand man is entirely based on these beliefs, and if they were to collapse, he would disappear [62] with them. Nobody would submit to any other law than that of the lineage, founded upon fear of the ancestors.

692 693 The Ilnti kuutu. This is the assembly of the men, without distinction of age (1) or kinship; this council (Ilnti = law) constitutes the legal apparatus of the Boni.

> 1. There is no precise rule for fixing the age from which an adolescent may sit in this council. [56] It is apparently when he has reached full physical development and earns his living by his own efforts, about 18 to 20 years. He does not have to be married.

/14 cont./

692 693 [641] An essential principle of the social life of the Refugee Blacks is that every citizen carries the law within himself. If several men are requested to arbitrate a private quarrel, it is said that they form a Hoti kuutu. But they can hand down only a sentence of conciliation. Only the general assembly convoked by the grand man has the power to impose its decision.

692 • 995 The ordinary role of the Hoti kuutu is to judge the dead, to make sure that they were not wisimã (sorcerers), to proceed to their interrogation in order to give the force of law to the answers, especially in what concerns inheritance.

692 693 995 The Hoti kuutu meets when a death is announced; the first to arrive go to the grand man who designates two of the captains to preside over the council this time (for all the members are equal). In fact, rare are the councils attended by all the men present in the villages. Most of the time the Hoti kuutu groups only about 30 men, mostly old men.

692 The Hoti kuutu meets very rarely to judge a living man. That has happened only three times between 1948 and 1957.

692 687 In 1948 the grand man convoked the Hoti kuutu to judge a man who, duly called as boatman to take him to Saint-Laurent, had not come. He was sentenced to make a palisade around the grand man's habitation, which took more than a month of work. /15/

692 685 In 1953 the council met to judge Loko (Dju), who had made himself guilty of aggravated theft (simulated shipwreck to the detriment of a Benzdorp trader and resale of the merchandise), for which he had been condemned by French justice to several months in prison. Loko had to make honorable amends in the presence of the assembled members of his lineage, then he was sentenced to make 50 planks for the benefit of the grand man.

[224] [643] In August, 1957, the council met to judge Pototo (Asisi-Dju), 23 years old, and Amusupé (Asisi-Aw.B.), 70 years old, who were guilty of a grave offense: misappropriation of a tapir (malpouri) killed by a Djuka who, feeling gratitude toward the grand man, had made known his intention to offer him part of the meat.

/158 cont./

156 The Boni woman, poor in emotional feelings, and jealous of her independence with respect to men, puts her pride into subsisting by her own efforts.

178 [156] The young women, even the ones with the freest habits, stay firmly attached to their village, to their plantings, and to the mode of life they received from their grandmothers. In fact, because of its structure and customs, the society of the Refugee Blacks has much less likelihood of suffering from the poisons spread by modern life than the patrilineal societies of Black Africa.

761 /159/ Death; Burial Rites

Death is for the Refugee Blacks an event of extreme gravity.

795 In order to ward off danger and permit the yɔrka of the dead person to take its place among the ancestors, the unstinting cooperation of everyone is required.

764 765 181 [621] [619] The ceremonies which have to do with death and mourning are by far the most important ones in the day-to-day life of the Refugee Blacks; for each one they represent a very heavy material load which is accepted without recriminations. It is really a veritable mobilization, which takes place within the framework of the village and not of the lineage. The apparatus set into motion is independent of the lineage, for it must function in the same way for an outsider, Djuka or Saramaka, who dies during a trip.

764 868 767 Participation in the burial rites is for all an essential religious duty. From childhood the Boni are prepared for this task and become, some of them kisimɛ̃ (coffin-makers), others ɔlɔmɛ̃ (grave-diggers), some others wasimɛ̃ (bathers of the dead).

767 467 Kisimɛ̃ and ɔlɔmɛ̃. It can be said that in each village, ɔlɔmɛ̃ and kisimɛ̃ constitute customary societies, provided with an organization and wielding veritable powers for the duration of their work.

/160 cont./

764 As soon as the death is announced, the kisimã hastily construct a platform called papay (1), while waiting for the

[824]

1. Papay = canon wood /F. canon, from L. canna reed, pipe, tube -- Tr./ (Cecropia Sp.), rapid-growing shrub similar to the African parasol-tree; it is used for the construction of the platform because of the great lightness of its stem.

building of the coffin which will be undertaken the next day.

The wasimã bathe the dead man with warm water after transporting him to a special place in the village. A hole is dug for the run-off of this water and closed up again afterward. This place is strictly reserved for this use; people do not go there any other time (at Boniville it is behind hut No. 5).

[767] The wasimã are two in number, two men and two women; in each lineage there are at least one man and one woman who are acquainted with this work.

The wasimã remove from the dead man every object (metal, ɔbia, etc.) and dress him in clean clothes. Cotton is

● [775] put in his nostrils and a chin-strap put on, all of which will be removed at the moment when the coffin is closed (so that the yɔrka of the dead man will not be impeded in its life beyond the grave).

The body placed in the papay is carried under the mortuary shed (krɛyɔsu = house /161/ of tears). A tuft of hair and the fingernails are taken, which are wrapped in a cloth and hung inside the krɛyɔsu.

764 /162 cont./
787 business of the tribunal. The people of the dead person's lineage
76 will have to settle that among themselves after the obsequies.
[784] The role of the tribunal is to make official the cause of death and give it the force of law.

764 Then the inheritance is taken up in the presence of the
787 near relatives of the dead man. The questions are asked suc-
428 cessively: "To whom dost thou leave thy boat...?" "To whom dost thou leave thy gun (1)...?" The coffin moves each time

> 1. That, unless the dead man has, before his death, in front of witnesses, formally indicated the apportionment of his belongings; in such a case, questions are asked only for the objects whose attribution had not been clearly specified.

toward one of the people present. /Figs. 22 and 23 appear here/

764 /163/ At the end of the third day after the death the
[789] burial is prepared; the dead person is asked from daybreak on whether he is ready for that; if not it can be postponed until the next day.

[767] The diggers have been working at the cemetery since the
[827] beginning of the day. They are young and strong men who have to work slowly, for not a drop of sweat may fall into the grave or their akka would risk remaining prisoner in it.

About 4:00 P.M. the bearers promenade the dead person one last time in the village for a supreme adieu. The near
[534] relatives go to the wharf. The dead man is hoisted into a canoe
[705] while the apinti drum calls his yorka so that it will not remain in the village.

/170 cont./

428 613 It is very clear in Kotoïda's case that the inheriting is within the matrilineage in the strict sense, bɛɛ. Only the members of the Afi lineage to which she belonged can profit by it.

764 Burial. About 2:00 P.M. the women of the lineage who had been preparing the food for the ɔlɔmɛ̃ since morning leave by canoe in the direction of the cemetery.

At three o'clock the last preparations begin. The occupants of the mortuary shed, completely veiled and supported by their near relatives, go to take up positions at the wharf for the last farewells (for they will not go to the cemetery).

The coffin is carried through the village one last time. This is the farewell of the dead woman to her family. The objects used in mourning are carefully collected, the earth of the shed floor raked up wherever the sanies of the cadaver might have fallen, and the whole put on the papay which is placed on the mortuary bark.

[775] At three o'clock an apinti drum is placed on the wharf to call the dead person (it is obviously à question of preventing the yɔrka from remaining in the village). The dead person turns up at the wharf. The coffin passes over a freshly cut banana-tree trunk placed at the limit of the village and of the beach. This is the symbolic passing of the dead person out of the world of the living. It is put on the canoe while the lamentations of the near relatives resound. The scene is not lacking in grandeur.

[783] The canoe draws slowly away, the drummer in the bow, while the spectators go down in a long procession to wash themselves free of the defilement of death.

[767] At four o'clock they arrive at the cemetery. The bearers of the dead person who have taken places in the canoe pass their burden to the ɔlɔmɛ̃ who have come to the edge of the river. This to mark the fact that /ʌ7ʌ/ the ɔlɔmɛ̃ are in authority at the cemetery. The bearers will only be present at the ceremony.

/172 cont./

764 787 Several times the paddle is seen to answer affirmatively, then negatively. Not one of those present can understand what is said, but not one shows impatience or doubt.

[613] Suddenly Tafanié orders his assistants to cut rods: the dead woman has asked that the people of her own lineage be beaten, guilty of having neglected the yɔrka's warnings. On seeing these preparations the people of Kotoïda's lineage /173/ run away in confusion in every direction while their adversaries pursue them with the appearance of having a very good time. Some take refuge in the water, others in the bush; none whatever can be caught.

Completely symbolic punishment, moreover, for at the end of ten minutes they are seen to reappear and take their places again among those present.

764 The obsequies are ended. Only the deceased's near relatives stay seated in their hammocks under the mortuary shed. They will remain there until the broko dɛ.

764 767 Payments of the ɔlɔmɛ̃. The ɔlɔmɛ̃ divide up one lot of cloth, keeping track of what they have received in the preceding obsequies. That does not appear to cause any discussion. If, after this, someone who has not furnished any work wants to take one of these pieces of cloth, he may do so by offering tafia to the people present.

764 787 775 Funeral ceremonies for people who die while traveling. If a man dies in the course of a distant trip, they take from the cadaver before burying it his hair and fingernails, which are brought back to his native village; in fact, it is assumed that as long as a fragment of the body is not buried, the yɔrka remains attached to it; hair and fingernails will therefore permit the interrogation of the yɔrka and will be buried in the cemetery with the usual rites.

/174 cont./

764 Cemeteries. There are two cemeteries in Boni country: one on the lands of the Dikan lineage for the people living on the French bank, the other downstream from Kotika for the inhabitants of that village. They are ordinary places which nothing indicates from the bank, for they are covered like the rest of the country by secondary forest. The dead are buried there in graves aligned parallel to the river, about seven meters apart. The dead are placed with heads turned toward the river. No separation by lineage exists within the cemetery.

The graves are not marked by any decoration, and at the end of about ten years, the mound having settled down, no trace of the burial remains.

[767] The graves are never cleaned. Only the ɔlɔmã heads, who have received special instruction, know the graves of the principal chiefs and the boundaries of the cemetery.

769 [754] [775] The Boni never go to the cemetery alone and do not make offerings on the graves of their near relatives. Someone who would frequent the cemetery alone would be suspected of being a wisimã seeking to capture the vɔrka of a dead person.

764 487 Even if they are right near the villages, cemeteries are never connected directly to them by paths, and the dead are transported by boat. By proceeding thus they hope to isolate the villages from evil influences.

766 If someone dies by drowning, he is buried away from the cemetery. According to Mr. W. F. van Lier, among the Diuka [761] [784] [184] all drowned persons are supposed to have been victims of a kunu; the Boni do not have this conception and declare that they have lost the meaning of this custom; one notices, however, that they observe mourning for the drowned according to the usual rites.

/174 cont./

764 Children are buried with the normal ceremonies only from about the age of six on. The rule is the following: A child is buried in the cemetery and broko dɛ is done for him if the next child of the same mother is beginning to walk.

766 Young children are buried without a coffin at a special site on the edge of each village; a board is simply placed on the [828] body before filling the grave. They have the idea that very [775] young children have no vital force, and that their yɔrka cannot do any harm. /Fig. 25 appears here./ /175/

764 Mourning

After the burial the wives of the dead man (or the husband if it is a woman), the nearest relatives on the maternal side, as well as the children, sojourn eight days more in the mortuary shed, until the broko dɛ.

765 From then on the obligations of mourning are limited, [831] for the near relatives of the dead person, to abstaining for a [775] year from dancing, wearing jewelry or too fine clothes; it goes [771] completely otherwise for the spouse of the dead person; the Refugee Blacks indeed take for granted, like the Creoles of Surinam, the persistence of the sexual jealousy of the dead person, whose yɔrka is thought to remain in contact with the living for a year.

State of the spouse in mourning. The principle is that the surviving spouse, until the lifting of mourning, is subject to the will of the dead person. In order to materialize that in an obvious way, he cannot, during this whole period, wear his usual clothes but must dress exclusively in pieces of cloth appropriated for him from among the ones the dead person possessed, or given by the nearest maternal relatives of the dead person.

/175 cont./

765 795 For the duration of the mourning, any indiscretion of the surviving spouse will draw upon him the pitiless vengeance of the yɔ́ka; it is important for him to make himself forgotten, to have a modest and decent demeanor. The dead person might be vexed with him for having kept his health and good looks. So they try to give the surviving spouse the aspect of a miserable 765 795 and unfortunate being. The dead person's relatives are particularly interested in having this discipline observed, for in 613 the opposite case the dead person's yɔ́ka would turn back in vengeance against his own lineage. During all the mourning the whole lineage considers itself in danger. Custom requires that during all this period the widower (or widow) be placed under the authority of the dead person's lineage.

765 In the case of concubinage, mourning is taken on by the 580 spouse even if the relations have not been made official. People cite the example of Way (Boniville who assumed mourning for a Djuka with whom she had begun to live before he could propose to her officially.

765 State of persons in mourning. A widower's status is exactly like [775] that of a widow, which tends to show that in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks the dead, men and women, have the same level of being and the same power over the living.

765 The surviving spouse is placed under the protection of 769 the ancestors of the dead spouse's lineage. Without this pro- 613 tection assured by the prayers of the members of this lineage, 627 he would find himself defenseless. The proof of 1078 this is that the principal sanction against him is to lift the mourning prematurely by going to the fraga tiki to tell the ancestors that one is no longer interested in him. That amounts indirectly to cursing him (see below the example of Gamba).

/177 cont./

765 602 613 If he was sick, it was △ Baafu (L2, E58), the eldest of the group, who was to pray for him. Alémin had nothing to do with the head of the Lapé lineage nor with his wife's classificatory uncles of the Lapé 1 group.

As for Diamanti (Aw.B.2, E56, † in 1955), her husband Booki (K3, E133) spent the mourning in the house that Diamanti had had constructed for her by a former husband. It was ○Emma, Diamanti's mother, and Sanéti, Emma's younger sister, who kept him under watch, under the responsibility of △ Akodo, the dead woman's brother (all the actual uncles being dead). Booki had nothing to do with either the classificatory uncles nor the head of the Awara Bakka lineage.

When Atuku (Aw.B.1, D20) died (1956), her husband Nétali was put under the authority of Kondoku, Atuku's brother, all the uncles in both the real and the classificatory sense being dead.

765 [778] The submission that this mourning entails must not be considered as symbolic. It bears down on the surviving spouse with an intolerable weight which can be borne only because of the conviction that it is the sole means of protection against the dead person's jealousy. Not only does the widower (or widow) do nothing to free himself from it, but at the least indisposition he will add, of his own accord, to the harshness of his state.

765 613 The widower can no longer use his clothes and personal utensils; he keeps /178/ his hammock and gun. All the rest, clothing (appropriated for the mourning), various utensils, is furnished him by the dead woman's lineage. Each woman of this lineage must give him a little of what she prepares. He himself must not ask for anything.

/179 cont./

765 431 [806] Before coming out of mourning, the widow must procure for herself at the minimum the money necessary for a demijohn of tafia as a contribution to the festival of the lifting of mourning. She must make a present of several cans of couac to her husband's mother.

765 843 184 A pregnant woman undergoes mourning exactly according to the general law. The custom described by several authors for the Saramaka, according to which the pregnant woman must join one of her husband's "brothers," does not apply to the Boni.

765 888 There are some attenuations of the harshness of mourning with respect to old women. For example in 1956, Lémiki (70 years), living in Boniville, was in mourning for her husband Tabiki (Awara Bakka, but residing since childhood with the Lapé lineage in Loka /180/ where he had been raised by his [768] [602] father). Lémiki alternately spent three weeks in her house and three in her husband's. It was Asamani, Tabiki's sister by the same father, who exercised authority over her.

765 768 [613] This remarkable example shows that as regards mourning (rights and duties), the principle of residence plays an essential role. He who has been reared by his father is in this respect taken out of his lineage, which loses all rights and all control over the conduct of the mourning.

765 [775] [768] The co-wives of a widower are subject to mourning on the same grounds as he, and for the same motive, since they are targets for the jealousy of the dead woman's yɔrka. However, they are authorized most often to live with their maternal family. When the period of dipi baaka has ended, they may take up conjugal relations again with their husband, but at intervals of several weeks and without his being able to spend the night with one of them. Each time he must ask permission of the head of the dead woman's lineage.

765 833 [613]

/180 cont./

765 are divided up equally among all the inhabitants of the village. But if the dead person had near relatives in the village, children, nephews, or brothers, it is they who stand the main burden.

[613] Members of the dead person's lineage who are settled in other villages contribute equally to the expenses and the organizing of the festival, but in a symbolic fashion. /181/

[623] A council (kuutu) of the village inhabitants sets the date; during the two weeks preceding each one is busy. The women 765 hull and winnow rice, prepare great quantities of couac and 262 sugar-cane juice. The busimã scour the bush and have meat and fish smoked. Each one, according to his means, buys tafia, sugar, chocolate, and other articles of food liked by the Refugee Blacks.

765 The celebration of the rites occupies a whole week. This • 775 is because, the Refugee Blacks think the influence of the dead person can be eliminated only progressively by the repetition of the rite of separation.

The first day, the yɔrka of the dead person whose mourning is going to be lifted is called by formulas beaten on the [535] apinti drum. Then possession dances take place.

765 The second day is reserved for the material preparation for the ceremonies to follow.

[613] The third day, the spouse in mourning, if there is one, is conducted by the members of the dead person's lineage under [822] the mortuary shed. He is dressed in red and is congratulated for having kept the mourning well. Then he is led to the river, [783] and old women of the dead person's lineage begin to bathe him [775] while adjuring the yɔrka to part company with him.

The fourth day at nightfall, all those present assemble [538] at the mortuary shed. They recite tales (Anãsi tɔli), [781] improvisations (mato), and riddles (ɔdo). This phase of the festival has as its object the concentrating of the attention of the hearers; it creates a warm, collective atmosphere which impregnates those present, bringing to them intense and highly colored emotions.

/181 cont./

765 Next come the dances, always in the order sɔnge, susa,
535 awasa, the rhythms given on the apinti drum. These are not
533 possession dances and do not appear in themselves to have a religious meaning; all involve choruses in which the singers do not accompany themselves on any instrument at all; these songs have no other meaning than to exalt life; the Refugee Blacks find their best artistic expression in them. Many of them demonstrate dazzling imagination; the subjects are extremely varied, and every year new ones are created. But there is a certain number of "classics" which reappear in each festival. Let us mention: "The man who calls his dog lost in the woods"; "The song of the Balen River"; "The woman who watches over her daughter," etc. These songs are very beautiful, and in the great mourning festivals it is difficult to hear them without emotion. Songs and dances follow one another without interruption until the sun's return. This is what is called broko dɛ, "break a day." This ritual, which has a key value in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, appears to be the affirmation by the group of the triumph of life over death.

765 The fifth day, a kind of buffet is served to the guests
[769] under the mortuary shed. In the afternoon there is the offering of food to the ancestors, tɔwɛ nyĩ; this rite is a communion between the dead and the living.

[769] On the morning of the sixth day, the ceremony ends with the offering of water, celebrated not at the fraga tiki but at the edge of the shed, in honor of the ancestors. They invoke one
• [775] last time /182/ the yɔrka of the dead man (or the dead woman), while asking it to separate from his spouse for good and to leave her in peace! "U puu a umĩ a baaka; yu ĩŋga umĩ yu paati tiɛ, na: mu siki, na: wĩ sani mu du ɛŋ, a mu dɛ bũ. (We lift the mourning of (this) woman; thou and the woman, you separate from each other today; she must not be sick, nothing must happen to her, she must be well)."

/182 cont./

965 Then they address the dead person in the name of the people of his village: "We have done with thee, stay there where God has placed thee."

The spouse in mourning is again bathed in the river by old women who have themselves gone through mourning.

[969] [975] Then they address the yaka of the ancestors and the entities of the Beyond who are imagined to have come in a crowd: "Ala sani di kɔm ya, yu mu luku ala ŋga bũ; u kaba ŋga yu; yu sa: waka ala peesi; (Each one of the beings who have come, be benevolent toward us all; we have finished with thee, thou canst go anywhere)."

On the seventh day most of those present begin to leave. An intimate ceremony brings the dead person's near relatives together in the very house where he died. They weep and lament one last time. Then a last offering of food is made in the same house, and they repeat the adjuration: "We have done with thee; stay where God has placed thee."

[968] [613] [431] The eighth day, the spouse whose mourning has just been lifted is conducted solemnly back to his village by the people of the dead person's lineage. He is congratulated, he offers food and drink to all those present. What he might have had left of savings disappears on this occasion.

He must sleep three nights in his village, still without being able to have relations with a woman. When this time limit has gone by, he comes to give back the red clothes which the dead person's lineage had lent to him. Only then is he free.

[114] Notes taken in *Boniville in November, 1957 on the occasion of* the lifting of mourning for Béniti. This festival is given for the lifting of mourning for ○ Béniti (Dju, E5, living in Boniville, † in 1955 at 75), of △ Tito (Kotika, Boniville, † in 1955 at 15), and of △ G..., boy of ten, son of a woman of the village of L'Enfant Perdu (Dip. I), dead in Boniville where he was reared by Téréza. The festival is given more than two years after death. Sometimes, when there is no spouse subjected to mourning

/186 cont./

765 In the evening the young people dance in front of the houses of several men who have given the tafia, but that no longer has the character of a ceremony. All is over at eleven o'clock in the evening.

On the sixth day, Nov. 13, at seven o'clock, the elders assemble again in front of the /187/ banana leaves where a little of the food offered the day before remains (dogs and chickens have eaten part of it).

A long palaver begins, disconnected and disconcerting, whose purpose escapes me. The clearest thing coming out of it is that the captains make known what the grand man (absent from the ceremony) told them in the morning. They thank the grand man for this festival which has gone off without any incident; they say that they can be counted on if some mourning rises in another village.

[291] [535] [177] Todo makes apologies to the grand man because the young people were dressed in a new style (large loincloths /calimbés/ reaching to the ground) and danced several Creole dances. He says to the audience that this does not conform to custom and that the true Boni dances are sègue, susa, awasa.

Next Fintiman pours water gently on the banana leaves, calling the dead whose mourning is being lifted. "We pour water for you, watch over the people in your family, over the grand man and over those who have worked for the mourning, that they may be in good health, that nothing bad happen to them. We have done with you; stay where God put you."

765 765 [168] While pronouncing these words, Fintiman breaks his dead mother's bench and dish (for the dead boys, nothing had been brought). It is a question not only of marking the break with the living but of procuring for the dead woman what will be necessary for her in the Beyond. For this purpose a paddle is also broken, which her son Kélémens prepared for her, and calabashes prepared by her daughters.

[795] /216 cont./ the akka is an immortal divine element
[795] attached to a human person for the duration of his life and which, at his death, returns to the domain of the divine, no longer keeping any contact with men.

[828] The akka is the source of life from which the human personality is nourished, but it is not this personality.

The Refugee Blacks consider the akka as a personal protector god; they are apt to say mi gadu, my god, for mi akka.

The concept of the akka was spontaneously tampered by the West Indians into that of the guardian angel. They speak in Haiti of the "big good angel."

For Refugee Blacks the life, health, and destiny of a man depend above all on the akka; they think that if the akka went away, the body and mind of the man could not remain bound together; he would die or lose consciousness. This is, a little, what happens each night, for they believe that the akka leaves the body to wander, which brings on the loss of consciousness.

[754] /217/ So the wisuma, the sorcerer, tries to profit by this to capture the akka so that the man may become insane.

The akka is thought to have tastes, desires, and goals foreign to those of the personality and of which the man, in his ordinary consciousness, has no knowledge. The akka can make [753] the man sick if he behaves in a way that it does not like. So [755] when someone is sick, he resorts to divination in order to know whether it is not the deed of the akka and, in the affirmative, for what motive. One might think that the akka behaves like a conscience in the moral sense of the term; that it gets angry if its bearer does something evil. But in reality the akka shows itself to be as arbitrary, wicked, and venal as the lower gods of the Refugee Blacks. If it gets angry (they say: mi akka mãndi), this is because its bearer wears clothes of a color it does not like, or because it wants an offering. We have never, on the other hand, heard a case spoken of in which the akka might have become angry with its bearer because he was a thief, liar, or adulterer.

/218 cont./

778 995 The yɔka. (The Boni say yɔɔka, the Djuka and the Creoles of Surinam yɔka.) The expression yɔka is used only to designate the spirit of the dead. But of course the elements of the yɔka are present in the living man.

794 823 /219/ The yɔka is the ordinary consciousness of the man, his memories, tastes, aversions, all that constitutes his personality. All that, for the Refugee Blacks, does not come from the divine plane but at least in part from former human existences, and after death will not reach the divine plane. The Refugee 978 Blacks seem to believe that after death, the yɔka remains unchanged, will keep the same desires, the same aversions, the same thoughts; it is simply no longer in ordinary life, it has passed to another plane, intermediate between the divine and the human, from whence it continues to remain in a certain fashion in contact with men. The various informants we questioned on this subject declare that they have no idea of the fate of the yɔka after death, of its place with respect to the divinities, of the rewards or punishments of which it may be the object according to the manner in which the man lived. These are questions they never ask themselves openly and which hardly interest them, all their interest being centered on earthly life. [154] The idea of a paradise is absolutely foreign to them; they acknowledge however in the case of the winimã that they will be stripped of the force that every living being receives from the divine, and that thus destroyed as beings, they will no longer be more than empty shadows.

969 The gaã yɔka, spirits of the ancestors, are believed to watch over their descendants and are subject to worship.

[191] Ancestor worship. Among the Refugee Blacks, ancestor worship is intimately bound up with all the acts of family and social life. They assume that the yɔka of the ancestors are always present near their descendants and that they protect them. It is through them as intermediaries that the force emanated by the divine is received by the living.

/220 cont./

769 798 982 her voice changed, imitating a man's; eyes staring, she appeared to have no longer any consciousness of what was around her. Then suddenly the attack would cease and she would busy herself with her household occupations in the most natural fashion. The yɔrka which was believed to become incarnate thus in Mili's body spoke of very commonplace things, repeating indefinitely sentences concerning minor happenings of the day, or asking for a small offering of tafia on its behalf at the fiaga tiki. A psychiatrist would doubtless have thought of an attack of mental dissociation.

[784] These yɔrka are not feared by their involuntary bearer, since none can exercise a kumu against his own lineage; they manifest themselves only exceptionally, sometimes indicating remedies or warning of dangers. Thus it is that A... of the Dipéiu II lo, who has a Kumẽnti besides, also has a yɔrka which revealed itself in him without ever having been called on. According to his comrades, this yɔrka sometimes steps in with a cavernous voice, notably in September, 1952, during a hunting expedition, where it shouted: "Let us not go that way, we shall meet a jaguar." A... lost consciousness for only a few seconds and had not been aware of anything. /Figs. 26 and 27 appear here./ /221/

795 828 The nãmseki (1). Each Refugee Black has a nãmseki, that is

1. This word seems to be a deformation of English "namesake" (homonym).

to say that certain elements of his personality are thought to originate from the reincarnation of a certain ancestor. This is a very obscure conception with the Boni, and without apparent correlation with their notion of the akka and the yɔrka; they never say: "I am the reincarnation of So-and-So," but simply:

/221 cont./

975 828 [184] "My nɛ̃mseki is So-and-So." Mr. W. F. van Lier, speaking of the Djuka who have much clearer conceptions on religious questions, gives an important clarification: in 1915 Grand Man Oséisi became incarnate in a newborn baby of the tribe, nevertheless he continues to be invoked as an ancestor before the fraga tiki. It seems, then, that it is a case of certain elements of the personality which are believed to be reincarnated, and not of the yɔrka as a whole.

787 It is important to distinguish the nɛ̃mseki from possession by a yɔrka. Possession by a yɔrka is an exceptional occurrence which is manifested in the form of trances, the yɔrka speaking through the mouth of its bearer; outside of these possessions, this yɔrka is believed to reside in the abode of the ancestors.

[613] A yɔrka can reveal itself thus only in a person of its matrilineage.

975 828 The nɛ̃mseki, on the contrary, exists in all men. The ancestor who is thus partially reincarnated is generally on the paternal side, but this is not an absolute rule.

A man is not conscious of his nɛ̃mseki and is acquainted with it only because his parents have revealed it to him. This nɛ̃mseki does not manifest itself in anything in everyday life; it does not impose any kina whatever and does not ask for offerings. However, when a young child falls ill, divination [153] may reveal that it is the doing of the nɛ̃mseki which is indignant [155] at being misunderstood. People hurry then, always with the help of divination, to find out the name of the nɛ̃mseki, proceeding by elimination. As a general rule, they allow themselves to be guided by resemblances of physiognomy, birthmarks calling to mind, for example, certain scars of the dead ancestor.

It is believed that the older a man is when he dies, the more time he will allow to elapse before being reincarnated.

/222 cont./

776 784 613 [825] [787] --The Papa gadu (Vɔɔdɛ). The kunu that one of them exercises upon a lineage comes uniformly from the fact that in times past, one of the ancestors had inadvertently killed a dagowe snake (boa), usual bearer of the Papa gadu. For example, the snake might have perished in the burning of a clearing. Some time after, the god had possessed a member of the lineage and revealed that henceforth it would exercise a kunu;

--The Ampuku. The kunu of an Ampuku begins in an analogous way; in days gone by an ancestor had, for example, cut a katu tree without performing the rites suitably, or had made a clearing in a place where an Ampuku was residing;

--The Kɛntamasu (who call themselves Asɔlo), gods of the termitaries, much feared, may exercise a kunu if, before cutting a clearing, someone has, in spite of all his searching, allowed a termitary to escape him, which thus was not the object of the indispensable rite;

775 784 613 762 --Finally, the kunu may be brought by a dead person's yɔɔka. For example, a man of lineage A had once upon a time unjustly accused a man of lineage B. The latter committed suicide out of revenge. The meaning of this act is not the same as in Europe. It is not a question of making one's enemies live in shame and remorse, but by sacrificing one's life to cause an eternal vengeance to be wreaked upon one's enemies. Some time after the suicide, the yɔɔka reveals itself in a man of his lineage and announces that it will pursue the members of lineage A eternally with its kunu.

784 Thus the offenses which the kunu punishes are not moral sins as we understand them, but involuntary acts without inner meaning. The purifications and sacrifices demanded are likewise purely exterior acts.

/223 cont./

784 613 428 begin his instruction in order to become a suitable bearer. (If this procedure were not carried out, the god would not cease its kunu at all, and the possibility of entering into contact with it and appeasing it would be lost. Besides, sooner or later it would come back into a member of the lineage.)

784 613 [607] The kunu strikes without regard to kinship ties, even if kinship between the bearer of the god and the supposed victim is very distant. Ex.: The Papa gadu of Donasi (Papalisson lo) struck a young woman, Gou, with illness in January, 1957. [782] [361] Donasi and Gou are only relatives in the ninth degree. The members of the entire Papalisson lineage assembled to supplicate the god: even people of Wétiti village in the lower Maroni came.

• 775 784 613 The kunu exercised by the yaka of a dead person has a special importance in the eyes of the Refugee Blacks, for it has profound repercussions on the relations among the lineages.

[428] In principle, the yaka exercising a kunu has as bearer a living member of its own lineage, who will bequeath it at his death. But it is also possible that the yaka may take as bearer a member of the lineage upon which it exercises the kunu.

[782] In both cases, the rite to appease the yaka is the same; the yaka can be invoked effectively only by the members of its own lineage, since one can pray (at least in principle) only to one's own maternal ancestors.

When matrilineage A is struck by the kunu exercised by a yaka of matrilineage B, its members thereupon go to consult the elders of matrilineage A /sic/ and ask them to try to calm [769] [778] [787] the anger of their ancestor. The members of lineage A assemble around the fraga tiki of lineage B, in back of the elders of this lineage, in the presence of the bearer of the yaka, who calls on his gita, goes into trances and prophesying. The yaka [782] usually asks for an offering of cane juice and tafia, which is made at the foot of the /224/ fraga tiki by the elders of lineage B (for the rite to be efficacious, the offering must have been furnished by lineage A).

/224 cont./

725 784 769 778 613 A yɔtka exercising a kunu may also demand that another smaller fraga tiki be erected for it beside the principal fraga tiki of its lo. In the villages of the Refugee Blacks one often sees these little crosses provided with white veils like the main fraga tiki, planted beside it a little obliquely.

725 784 674 The notion of the kunu exercised by a yɔtka explains the rarity of murder among the Refugee Blacks. How would you dare to kill someone when, as soon as it is freed from his body, his yɔtka will have full latitude to make you sick, to make tree branches fall across your path, to cause to suffer and to kill all those dear to you? If someone is blinded by hate, it is the idea of suicide which will dominate him. In October, 1952 we were able to observe this reaction in a man who had just been subject to a deep humiliation: "I am going to kill my body in order to go to kill that man and his whole family," he said to us, prey to a fit of rage; fortunately, when the fit had passed, he came back to a more sound outlook on things.

725 784 613 696 [197] It is to be noted that a yɔtka cannot exercise a kunu against its own lineage. This notion explains why, in the times when they exercised absolute authority, tribal chiefs had those condemned to death executed by men of the same lineage. Apparently similar practices were the rule in olden days in several African kingdoms, which allows one to think that notions analogous to those of the kunu may be rather widespread there.

784 613 Situation of the various lineages with respect to the kunu. There we touch on one of the most secret aspects of the social life of the Refugee Blacks. Years of living among them are necessary in order to obtain precise information on the nature and the mode of action of the kunu acting on the various lineages.

784 613 428 Nearly all the entities which now exercise their kunu on the Boni have been in their lineages since a very ancient period, to the point where the name of their first bearer is forgotten. They are transmitted inexorably from generation to generation. In the course of the ages, the kunu have accumulated, and now certain lineages are living with four, five, or even six kunu.

/224 cont./

784 613 776 789 Kunu of the Dju lineage. The Dju lineage in 1958 was affected by four kunu:

--An Ampuku which has exercised its vengeance since time immemorial, to the point where the origin of this kunu is no longer remembered, its bearers being Dabisa (G25) and Adyidya (E19), two women about 50 years old. This Ampuku formerly had as its bearer an ancestor named Agoabuchi, who died about 1940. Two or three years after his death, it manifested itself in Dabisa;

--A Papa gadu named Adawa which has also pursued the lineage with a pitiless vengeance since the time of the great ancestors. It revealed itself to the preceding generation in an ancestress named Sapiké (D5), and a long time after her death it passed into Pamasa (E26), a woman of 35. This kunu has grown worse since /225/ two other Papa gadu revealed themselves in recent years in two women named Kulina (F9) and Diana (E9). They declared that they were the descendants of the first one and that they came in support of it;

784 613 775 787 562 --A yaka whose name nobody wanted to tell us because they were so afraid of it. It is that of a man of the Awara Bakka lineage, who committed suicide two or three generations ago when he was unjustly accused of a crime by a man of the Dju lineage. Since then, this yaka has been exterminating the Dju lineage little by little. Its bearer in 1958 was an old woman of the Awara Bakka lineage, named Namu;

784 613 776 787 --A Kantamasu since, a very long time ago, an ancestress whose name is forgotten inadvertently destroyed a termitary while burning a clearing. It has as bearer a very old woman named Wima (E3) († 1957), and it manifested itself also in Ata (F2).

784 613 787 562 Thus, in this group, the maleficent gods had exclusively women as bearers; out of about 20 adult women, seven were participating in the functioning of the kunu.

/225 cont./

784 613 780 562 One sees from this example how the influence of women, exerted in arbitrary fashion, in a domain placed outside of custom and ordinary social life, weighs on the life of the group.

784 614 571 Kunu of the Dipélu lineage. The situation of the Dipélu lineage with respect to the kunu is particularly interesting. Although split for perhaps 100 years into two separate groups, Dipélu I (L'Enfant Perdu and Apatu villages) and Dipélu II (Kormotibo and Asisi-Dip. II villages), this group still constitutes an unified unit with respect to the kunu. Neither time nor [484] distance (it takes more than a week of traveling to make the round trip between L'Enfant Perdu and Apatu) has been able to break it up. The Apatu people come very often (at least some of them) to be present at the collective prayers which take [155] place at L'Enfant Perdu to appease a kunu in order to cure a sick person.

784 614 226 [787] The oldest kunu ("since Africa") is that of a Papa gadu god whose keeper was ○ Dika (Dip. I. D10, † 1951) and which passed after her death into ○ Pééchina (Dip. I. E42, L'Enfant Perdu village). This kunu strikes indiscriminately the people of L'Enfant Perdu, Apatu, Kormotibo, Asisi-Dip. II, and the Dipélu fraction residing in Boniville. Of it, these past years, [761] have been attributed the death of ○ Nay (Dip. I. E6, living in Boniville), the illness of △ Akwali (Dip. II. F7, Kormotibo [753] village) and of ○ Bongo (same village).

784 226 614 [602] Another very old kunu is the one exercised by the yɔ́ka of a Surinam Creole who had settled with the Dipélu people a very long time ago. He was suspected of sorcery and killed. Since then his yɔ́ka comes back regularly to exterminate the Dipélu.

/225 cont./

784 Having no known lineage (his family, if he had any, was
● 785 in Surinam), it had taken people of the Dipélu lineage as
614 bearers. The last was △ Denis † in 1938. Since Denis'
787 death, it no longer has a bearer. The questioning of the dead
reveals that they died by its kunu. The members of the two
[782] fractions of the lineage meet together (at least two or three
members of each village come) to supplicate it.

784 A third kunu, very interesting in origin and supposed
614 action, /226/ in 1957 was borne by Kwau (Dip. I, E1, Kotika
village). It results from the killing of an anaconda snake by
Apatu † (Dip. I, C1), companion of the explorer Crevaux
when he was traveling to /in/ Brazil. Upon contact with
Europeans Apatu had become a freethinker and was no longer
observing the laws of his people. Among the later victims of
[153] this kunu was counted Kwami (Dip. II, F4, Kormotibo village)
[155] who, gravely ill, had had to go to L'Enfant Perdu where the
god had been invoked for him and offerings made. The death
[161] of Manga (Dip. I, E5, Boniville, † about 1930) was particu-
larly attributed to it.

No other kunu has revealed itself in Apatu village since
its founding in 1862.

784 A fourth kunu concerning all the Dipélu has as bearers
614 women of the Dipélu II group. It results from the inadvertent
706 murder of a Papa gadu whose bearer was a dagowe snake killed
787 in the course of the nivrée /fishing/ of a pool by Akonté
522 † (Dip. II, B1), transmitted to Kondo †, then to Alama
(Dip. II, E1).

Since then Papa gadu have revealed themselves in
○ Apalta (Dip. II, F9, Kormotibo village) and in ○ Kasia
(Dip. II, G28, Asini-Dip. II village). They declared them-
selves to be the descendants of the first and to come in support
of it.

/226 cont./

784 182 Finally, a fifth kunu is threatening to show itself. This is a remarkable affair which clarifies at the same time the legal and religious conceptions of the Refugee Blacks.

672 About 1918, a stupid accident which happened at Dagouédé (gun which went off by itself at the moment when it was being stowed in a boat) caused the death of a girl, Santonia, daughter of Kuluba (Aw.B.1). The unwitting perpetrator of the accident was Kwau (Dip. I. Apatu village). (692) There were people in the Awara Bakka lineage who accused him of having done it on purpose, but the grand man judged that he was innocent and the affair was shelved.

784 614 795 787 Now in April, 1957, Kiboya (Dip. II), a young woman of 25, was attacked by a fit of possession. It was Santonia's yanka which was supposed to reveal itself in her. It declared that it was going to exercise a kunu on Dipélu. It was not claiming that Kwau had killed her on purpose and even asked the Awara Bakka not to make reprisals.

628 614 Nevertheless, full of fury, a party of Awara-Bakka went the next day to attack the village of L'Enfant Perdu, demolishing a certain number of huts and pursuing the inhabitants, some of whom took refuge in the water and others in the bush. There were, however, no serious blows.

The next day they went to attack Kormotibo in the same way. It is to be noted that only after that did they think of blaming Kwau, who was then living at Wacapou. But the grand man had intervened in the meantime to re-establish peace.

In both cases the façades of several shacks were smashed and two men, Bonana and Amatodja, who had run less fast than the others, were struck symbolically.

/226 cont./

628 614 784 787 156 769 778 The members of the Dipélu lineage did not believe a word of this affair, convinced that Kiboya, a proud and scheming woman, had pretended the gita to make herself interesting. Nevertheless, to bring back peace, they decided to go to Asisi and to ask pardon in front of the fraga tiki, pouring tafia, asking the ancestors not to take vengeance, the living being reconciled.

784 614 775 /227/ (Note that in this affair, the yɔ́rka manifests itself in a member of the lineage on which it exercises the kunu.)

784 614 613 Kunu of the Awara Bakka lineage. The Awara Bakka lineage does not form a unit with respect to the kunu, and the situation of its fractions is particularly interesting. This lineage includes:

--A principal fraction (Aw.B.1);

--A fraction whose kinship ties with the first are forgotten (Aw.B.2), whose position with respect to the kunu we have not been able to define.

--Finally, a group descended from Anèta, Djuka woman, wife of Péèyon † (Aw.B.1) settled in Asisi with her descendants in uterine line. We have called this group Aw.B.3. It has a separate kunu originating in the Djuka village of Tabiki where Anèta came from.

784 787 796 613 428 The Awara Bakka I, all living in Asisi village, had to our knowledge three kunu in 1957:

--One exercised by a Fa,a gadu god, borne up to 1957 by ○ Kuluba (Aw.B.1, D1). At her death in April, 1957, she bequeathed it, contrary to custom, to a person of another fraction, Summa (Aw.B.3). But the god did not ratify this legacy and, in January, 1958, it manifested itself in ○ Léna (Aw.B.1, F52), thus remaining in the same lineage;

/227 cont./

--A second, very old kunu is exercised by a yɔ́ka of the Dipélu II lo. Gy...., dead so long that he cannot be placed on the genealogical table; it, too, had as bearer a member of the lineage on which it was exercising the kunu. ○ Akumuyé (Aw.B.1, D17) † 1957.

Thus the Awara Bakka and Dipélu lineages exercise the kunu reciprocally one against the other;

--A third kunu of recent origin is exercised by a Papa gadu god which had as bearer in 1957 ○ Irma (Aw.B.1, E37). It results from the inadvertent killing of a Dagowe /sic/ snake by [illegible] Taawa, Irma's brother. At the end of 1957 this kunu had yet brought on only illnesses of such a kind that people could still hope to exorcise it.

The Aw.B.3 group has a special kunu of its own and considers itself out of reach of the kunu of the Aw.B.1.

Anèta, originating in the Djuka village of Tabiki, is subject to the kunu of that lineage as are all her descendants in uterine line. On occasion of serious illnesses the latter have sometimes had to go to Tabiki village to supplicate the kunu.

This kunu is the one of a god borne by Akanté, Anèta's daughter. In September, 1958, Summa, Akanté's daughter, was sick. The god revealed that this was its doing. It was supplicated (the other fractions joined the group) and she then got well.

Kunu of the Afi lineage. The descendants of Afi † (woman coming from the tribe of the Bakabuchi of Surinam) live for the most part in Assi in close symbiosis with the /226/ Awara Bakka lineage. They are in a situation analogous to that of Anèta's descendants (Aw.B.3) but, perhaps by the simple fact of their number, they form a more individualized unit.

/228 cont./

They are the object of three kunu:

--One exercised by a Papa gadu god whose bearer up into 1956 was Kotolida († Oct. 1956), who bequeathed it to ○ Mani (Afi lineage, d12).

--The other exercised by a yɔrka of the Lapé lineage. This kunu dates from about 60 years ago; Aléмin (Afi lineage, b3, Korinotibo village), 80 years old in 1957, had when he was young cut a clearing in a place which was found to be an old abandoned Boni cemetery (opposite Maripasoula). Some time afterward, a yɔrka revealed itself in a woman of the Lapé lineage, saying that it was exercising a kunu against the family of the sacrilegious person.

It is to this yɔrka, whose bearer is M... (L2, Bonaville), that the death of Kotolida in October, 1956 is especially attributed.

--A third kunu is exercised by A.... of the Papalston 2 lineage. A... had committed pikadu. Surprised by Aléмin (Afi lineage), he had paid the latter to obtain his silence. But Aléмin had talked. Dishonored, A... committed suicide with a gunshot; some time afterward his yɔrka revealed itself in Aléмin; it exercises a kunu on this lineage.

Situation of the other lineages with respect to the kunu. The Papalston lineage is divided into two groups: Papalston 1 (the principal one) and Papalston 2, of which there remain only three living members: two women and one young man. This remainder of a lineage continues to bear its own kunu, which is unique and separate from that of the principal group.

The principal group forms a unit with respect to the kunu.

The Lapé lineage, cut from the point of view of genealogy into two pieces, forms a unit with respect to the kunu. We have been able to collect only fragmentary information on the various kunu of this village.

/228 cont./

A kunu is exercised by a Dipélu yaka, borne in 1956 by a Loka woman. It is invoked before the fraga tiki of l'Enfant Perdu village (Dipélu). Sometimes a broko dé is celebrated for it in the same form as the ceremony of the eighth day after death.

We have likewise not been able to collect complete information on the kunu of the Kotika lineage. This lineage, divided into three fractions, forms a unit with respect to the kunu.

A kunu is exercised by the yaka of a Surinam Creole assassinated in formertimes by a member of the lineage. Its bearer in 1956 was Toto (K1, E88), a man of the Kotika in living in Sorinville. In 1958 a young woman of the lineage, Awini (K1, E37), died suddenly; the yaka revealed that it had struck Awini because she had a liaison with Sintamann (K3, E145), thus committing gbadu. The idea of the collective responsibility of the lineage is so deeply accepted by the Boni that the near relative of the dead woman did not reproach Sintamann at all.

/229/ A yaka of the Kotika lineage may exercise a kunu on the Djuka. This is the case of an affair going back to 1930: a young woman died some time after having a serious discussion with a Djuka woman who had hit her. Deaths among the Djuka these last years had been attributed to its vengeance.

It seems that there is no other kunu exercised by a Djuka upon a Boni lineage and vice versa. This is surprising, considering the fights which in former times set the two tatoms against each other.

The Djuka and Saramaka living isolated in the midst of the Boni know their kunu, which were revealed to them in childhood. In case of sickness, they employ divinatory procedures in order to know what kunu is concerned, then they make offerings. But in case of serious illness, they are forced to go back to the village of origin of their lineage.

/231 cont./

which people do not hesitate to come to ask for remedies or opinions, in spite of the evil they have done to the lineage and perhaps will do tomorrow. It is even allowable to wonder whether people do not prefer to consult the most wicked divinities, for they are believed to be stronger.

The kunu focuses, turns aside toward high purposes the blind forces of superstition, fear, and rancor. Several authors who have written on the Refugee Blacks have stated that calamities were almost unfailingly attributed to sorcery (wisi). This is a grave error due to the fact that they believed they could transpose to the Refugee Blacks what is observed among the Creole populations of Surinam. If this were true, no positive social bond could exist. We believe we can assert that among the Refugee Blacks divination lays the blame on sorcery in only scarcely a tenth of the misfortunes. Here, among other examples, are several typical cases concerning Boni who worked with us or whom we have known especially well:

--In 1948, Fuuiman (Dju) falls ill (violent pains in the legs): kunu of a Kintamasu.

--In 1948, Galmo (Papaliton) is accidentally hurt (gun backfire): kunu.

--In 1949, Dholi, captain of the Dju to, is smitten with hemiplegia and remains paralyzed. He dies in 1951: kunu of a Papa gadu.

--In 1950, a Saramaka is killed in a hunting accident (a gun in poor condition went off by itself): [illegible] (accident).

--In 1951, Kanayen (Kotika) drowns while sailing at night on the river: wisi.

--In 1951, Loka (Dju) dies at the age of 70: kunu of an Amapaka.

--In 1951, F... (Dju) is seriously hurt by the falling of a branch while cutting his clearing: kunu of a yaika.

761 /231 cont./
784 --In 1952, Dolo (Awara Bakka) dies almost all of a
684 sudden with the symptoms of peritonitis: kunu, punishment for incest committed by another member of the lineage.

--In 1952, Maëndo, ten years old, son of Otaya (Awara Bakka) accidentally drowns: natural accident (Sagaaku).

784 --In 1954, Béniti (Dju) dies at nearly 75 years of age:
796 kunu of a Papa gadu.

784 --In 1954, Agyénési (Aw.B.) dies almost all of a sudden:
754 killed by Obia (he was a wisimã).

--In 1955, Tabiki (Awara Bakka) dies at over 80: natural illness.

784 --In 195 , Kotoida /sic/ (Afi lineage) dies suddenly,
785 aged about 60: kunu of a yaka.

784 --In 1957, F... (Lapé) is gravely ill with symptoms of
796 typhoid: kunu of a Papa gadu.

753 --In 1957, Sokodo (Dip. II) dies at 40: kunu of a
741 Kitamasu.

75 /232/ One observes that in the 15 cases cited here, the kunu
761 interferes ten times, while in three cases natural causes: illness, accident, were assumed.
784

In reality, the Refugee Blacks do not have the conception of a natural world, subject to known or knowable laws, which is set against a supernatural world. The intervention of a Papa gadu is neither more nor less natural than an illness or an accident. There is only, on the plane of human life, more or less frequent intervention by suprahuman forces.
812 The intervention of these forces is made according to laws which embrace the totality of beings and things. Laws which men cannot understand but of which they believe they have a partial and empirical knowledge.

/232 cont./

75 784 796 It is important not to confuse the kunu with the sufferings which other divinities can arbitrarily make men undergo. The kunu has a systematic character. But a divinity theoretically beneficent, and which has come into a man after being called on, may also from time to time bring misfortunes if such is its whim of the moment.

752 796 784 In 1949, G... (Dju) was busy cooking a crab in the house of his mother D... A machete which was fastened to the wall suddenly detached itself and wounded him in the right hand. Now his mother had an Ampuku which had imposed [789] [428] the crab on her as kina. This Ampuku, immediately called on, revealed that it really was it which had struck G..., for it did not like to see D...'s son eat crab (note that G... was not at all held to the observance of this kina, for no kina is transmitted from mother to son).

784 795 613 969 Neither must the kunu exercised by a yaka be confused with the vengeance that a dead person can exercise against the members of his own lineage in order to punish them for having neglected their duties.

Punishment inflicted by an ancestor of the lineage seems for the Boni to be a notion distinct from that of the kunu. Vengeance exercised by a yaka upon its own lineage is regarded as exceptional and devoid of the inexorable and definitive character of the kunu, but they assume it to be [962] possible. They cited to us the case of Yali (Loka), who [153] committed suicide when accused of sorcery by the people [761] of his lineage. Since then, his yaka has caused sicknesses and deaths in his own village.

796 784 613 [761] Conversely, a god which exercises the kunu upon a lineage may in certain cases intervene in favor of this lineage if such is its whim of the moment. Thus the death of Diamanta (Aw.9.2. Asisi village, † in 1955) is attributed to the god which exercises the kunu on the village of L'Enfant Perdu and whose bearer was Péréchina. Diamanti had wronged someone of this village and the god had intervened against her.

/232 cont./

In a general way, they consider that the bearer of a god exercising the kunu has nothing to fear from it personally if he rigorously observes the kina which have been imposed upon him. On the other hand, this god will punish any injury to its bearer. Thus these bearers (almost always old women) live surrounded by respect and fear.

/233/ Observations in January, 1958 (misfortunes attributed to vengeance of ancestors on their own lineage).

Do (Lapé) is taken ill on January 7, 1958 with a violent attack of dysentery. The same day his five-year-old son is grievously hurt at the wharf by falling on a broken bottle. Alarmed by this coincidence, the members of the Lapé lo assemble and proceed to question a possessed person. The latter reveals that it is the doing of an old woman of the lineage, Atala, dead for two years. Several lineage members have already been sick from this; the dead woman wanted to sanction offenses committed by the people of the lineage.

The same day in Boniville, Klémenti (Dɔ), to whom I am recounting this affair, tells me that before the lifting of mourning for his mother Bénïti, he and his sisters were sick. Divination showed that it was the doing of Bénïti, who wished to hasten the celebration of the ceremony.

The kunu and social peace among the Boni. Role of the grand man. The kunu exercised by a yɔnka creates very strange relations among the Boni lineages. As blind and arbitrary as the vengeance attributed to the yɔnka may be, the Boni have the sense of the legal unity of the lineage too much for any resentment to exist: "They are killing our family..."; and yet the two lineages find themselves henceforth irreparably bound together. The victims of the kunu can no longer get along without people of the lineage of the yɔnka which pursues them with its vengeance, since they alone, by their prayers, can appease temporarily the anger of their ancestor. One conceives of the

784 /233 cont./ One conceives of the
795 interminable dimension which this situation entails: if the
613 manifestations of the kunu do not cease, the victims let it be
578 understood that the prayers were badly made..... /Figure 28 appears here./

961 Every suspicious death whose circumstances lead to the
628 belief that /234/ an inhabitant of another village was respons-
613 ible can bring on a punitive expedition against that village and
784 other villages of the same kin group. By taking this vengeful attitude even before the grand man has been notified and the blamed people heard, the people of the dead person's lineage are thinking above all else of taking precautions against the action of the dead person, who could turn back his vengeance
628 against them. Actually, these fights are above all symbolic; the wisdom of the Refugee Blacks has promulgated precepts which many nations could take as a pattern, in order that these punitive expeditions might not have serious consequences:

--One may strike only with the fists, and blood must not flow;

--Men may strike only men, while the women find fault with women;

--One may fight only on the village common and before witnesses, never in the bush or on the river. As a general rule, the people aimed at by the expedition do not resist, but flee into the bush or on the boats, or group themselves around the fraga tiki, holy place which the aggressors must respect.

628 We have told about the expedition made in April, 1957
613 by the people of Asisi-Awara Bakka against the villages of L'Enfant Perdu (Dipéla I) and Kormotibo (Dipéla II). Eight years earlier, in 1949, another squabble had thrown the Dipéla against the Awara Bakka after the death of Pétikona (Dip. II), whom her husband Boofo had taken to Surinam and who had died there. The Kormotibo people claimed that Boofo was responsible for her death. They went to attack the people of Asisi who, although three times more numerous, did not try

/234 cont./

695 Fist-fighting is practiced also between individuals as a test for justification. If someone is unjustly accused of theft, this is the first idea which occurs to him, even before the oath before Odun. On this subject the Refugee Blacks have a conception analogous to that of the ancient Europeans, according to which God will come to the aid of the innocent person, giving him the strength of ten. This fighting, too, is subject to precise rules; it can be indulged in only publicly, in a village, never in the bush or on the river.

In spite of the importance attached to the oath before Odun, Boni custom does not make provision for any test for justification having a recognized legal value. This is what makes 628 613 the symbolic battle indispensable. Intervention is then asked of the head of a neutral lineage in order to restore peace. If no death or calamity takes place allowing /235/ belief in the unappeased vengeance of a dead person, the affair is very quickly forgotten. For example, in examining the table of marriages among the various lineages, one ascertains that there are a number of normal unions between the Dipéla and the Awara Bakka.

643 692 In these kinds of affairs the grand man has two very exact functions:

--To reveal pretense;

--To intervene as supreme arbiter in case of necessity.

[789] [895] Each time that someone is attacked by a fit of possession and clumsy to speak in the name of a yorka coming to exercise a kumu, the lineage head conducts him to the grand man who makes sure that there is no question of pretense.

683 715 987 695 The grand man, in the thought of the Boni, has the power to compel any yorka to manifest itself.

He conducts the person concerned to the fiaga siki and invokes the yorka. If pretense is involved, the individual will not be able to articulate a syllable. If it is true possession, the yorka will speak through his mouth.

643 /235 cont./
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A few years ago a Kormotibo woman was thus confounded. She had wanted to prevent possession by a yɔ́ka in order to blackmail another family.

784 Grand Man Difu recently forbade the bequeathing of god:
428 and yɔ́ka exercising the kúnu (1). People will wait for them
643
[789]

1. Let us recall that the dead are questioned on this subject as for the apportionment of the rest of their heritage.

to manifest themselves of their own accord. That will reduce the risks of pretense.

643 The grand man's lineage does not exercise any kúnu upon
613 another lineage, and no kúnu is exercised upon it. For the Boni
995 this is a fundamental idea, because the grand man is precisely
784 the supreme recourse in case of persistent calamities attributed to the yɔ́ka of a dead person. The grand man has the power to exorcise all the dead Boni. If his lineage exercised a kúnu or were victim of one, he would be judge and litigant at the same time.

When, with the death of Grand Man Difu, the Dikan lineage is extinct, and when the function passes to another lineage, consideration of the kúnu exercised by the lineages upon one another will be determinative in the choice of his successor.

Divination; Premonition; Dreams

787 Divination. It plays an essential role among the Refugee Blacks
626 as in all animistic societies. Individuals have recourse to it
182 to inquire all important discussions; in large measure one can say that for them it takes the place of will and conscience.

/239 cont./

754 787 Trial for sorcery does not exist among the Boni, but a procedure exists which allows for pinning down suspicions.

After each death the dead person is asked the question: Is it wisi that killed thee? The question is put last (they first ask kumu, then fyo-fyo /see p. 398/).

If it is wisi, they ask: Is it such-and-such a family? (In general it is in the lineage itself), then the names of the lineage members are uttered successively until there is a positive response.

754 695 The one who is thus accused of wisi can be summoned to justify himself before the grand man, but that can only have the character of an investigation and not a trial. The suspected individual may not be challenged. They accept the fact that it is only a matter of presumption and that the dead accuser can lie, pursuing vengeance beyond the grave.

The Refugee Blacks declare that there is no certainty about wisi.

754 613 692 A remarkable principle of customary law is that if a member of a matrilineage /240/ is believed to have killed one of his "brothers," the judiciary power of the Boni cannot interfere. It is an affair purely within the lineage.

754 Thus no one can be challenged or expelled for an act of sorcery. If one suspects somebody strongly, one will avoid him, one will turn the cold shoulder to him, all the time remaining polite, but one will not show anything. To this principle is attached a very noble idea, that of the interdiction of vengeance. He who is victim of sorcery must under no circumstances do counter-sorcery. He can only ask for the protection of the deus. One must not under any circumstances ask a divinity or his ancestors to harm his aggressor.

754 715 787 Among the Refugee Blacks there is only one sanction against the wisimã: They will necessarily be found out at their death. The yaka of the dead person, interrogated by the elders,

754 765 789 /240 cont./ will be obliged to confess: "It is I who killed So-and-So and So-and-So." They immediately inform the grand man, who 754 762 orders the usual procedure against wisimã: Ceremonies are suspended, the body is transported by boat to a place reserved for cursed people, downstream from Boni country, and it is abandoned in the bush without being buried. Grand Man Difu is trying to modify this custom and to compel burial of wisimã in a special cemetery, but without great success up to now, it seems.

754 765 768 There is no broko dε. The spouse may remarry immediately. Since the property of the deceased are presumed to be ill-gotten, inheritance is cancelled. The house is destroyed and thrown into the water, the boat abandoned to the current. Personal belongings of the deceased are turned over to the grand man who distributes them to whom he wishes.

The near relatives of persons thus designated are overcome with shame but can say nothing. Not a bit of responsibility is imputed to them.

754 765 784 How does society protect itself against the sorcery of the wisimã from beyond the grave? According to Grand Man Difu, this is a problem which does not come up. The wisimã has been killed by Odun as punishment for his crimes. Since every being draws its force from the divine, he has no more force, he is destroyed as a being, he is no longer anything but an empty shadow incapable of doing harm.

754 765 792 [165] In fact, among the Refugee Saramaka these trials of dead people are very rare. Whereas about 15 persons die per year on the average in Boni country, including about ten adults, in the last 20 years (1) only about 20 persons were revealed to be wisimã.

1. Disregarding the period 1957-1959 when a definite fresh outbreak of the fear of wisimã was observed.

/240 cont./

754 be wisimã. We were able to draw up the list of these from
775 information from diverse sources which agreed very well.
787 In nearly every case persons were concerned who had already been accused, during their lifetime, of being wisimã; and on whom suspicions had been directed either by reason of their solitary life and irascible character or as a consequence of a series of coincidences.

754 In general, they tend to accuse of wisi any individual
828 who systematically isolates himself, shows ill will in the observation of customary law, or shows himself particularly selfish, irascible, or jealous.

754 /241/ They tend also to suspect those who in their youth had
648 abandoned the tribe for years to settle among the Creoles, and those who frequent the Creoles of the region, known as quimboiseurs, or who go too often to Saint Laurent or Paramaribo to consult lukumã (clairvoyants) (1).

1. Consulting a clairvoyant is not contrary to the laws of Odun. Infringement of these laws begins when one claims to act upon other people.

754 Also deemed suspect of wisi is anyone who gets rich too
434 quickly or shows an immoderate love of money. A hard-
828 working man who earns his living in broad daylight is never accused of wisi. But the one who engages in trade is suspect. It is thought, for example, that G...., who furnished a shop and earns much money, is a "pledged man." It is said also of F...., a fishing contractor particularly greedy for profit. But neither has been accused openly.

/241 cont./

152 828 754 777 Jealousy. To speak of jealousy as a negative magic force is not to be false to the thought of the Refugee Blacks. They regard it as an attenuated force of wisi, capable of bringing misfortunes even if no sorcery has been formulated. Jealousy is 152 157 very marked in their character, associated with an individual tendency verging on asocial tendencies. When somebody is accused of 754 wisi, jealousy is the commonest explanation of the crimes 152 828 attributed to him; it is thought for example that a man can be jealous of his brother's growing rich to the point of making him die; that a woman may be jealous of the beauty or health of 152 her sister's children. Not laying themselves open to jealousy 156 is the constant preoccupation of the Refugee Blacks; one ob- 828 serves it in daily behavior, for example in the greetings which 576 they exchange on the river. They never say, "I am well," but: "I feel only fair." If they come back from hunting they say, "I found a little."

152 156 828 [182] [463] Examples are not lacking of people who avoid building a fine house or buying an outboard motor in order not to give cause for jealousy. This preoccupation has profound repercussions on the material life and the economy of the Refugee Blacks; it explains in particular the absence of specialized professions and trade among them.

[183] [591] Many aspects of the customary law of the Refugee Blacks have no other function than to exorcise, if one may say so, tendencies toward jealousy and selfishness which, if they were given free rein, would poison the life of the collectivity.

76 181 725 828 The rites of death and mourning, which we have shown to constitute the pivot of the social life of the Refugee Blacks, are entirely based on the idea of preserving the surviving spouse from the effect of the jealousy of the deceased.

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Various Beliefs

578 Fyo-fyo. If a Boni is on bad terms with someone of his lineage or of another lineage, he has the absolute right to turn a cold shoulder to him and stop having anything to do with him. But if, hiding his rancor, he seeks, from selfish motives, to maintain the appearance of friendly relations, he risks falling ill, being struck by various calamities, or even dying from the effect of what the Refugee Blacks call a fyo-fyo. The nature of this force is not clear; they know only that its support is a small, common insect named fyo-fyo. They declare that if a person dies from the consequences of a fyo-fyo, one of these insects will be seen leaving his body through the nose at the moment of death.

828 753 961 789 [825]

776 Taku sani. By this name the Refugee Blacks designate maleficent [775] entities of the bush, which they imagine as of nonhuman nature by contrast to the taku yɔrka, wandering spirits of dead people rejected by society. These entities are lower beings devoid of [753] consciousness but dangerous for men into whom they may enter, [828] rendering them sick or mad. Certain of these entities are believed to reside in plants, like the wɔtkɔn; others are thought to take on the appearance of dwarfs (baku), whom certain people believe they sometimes see at dawn on the outskirts of villages.

751 One protects oneself against taku sani by special obia, and those who do not feel completely secure take a certain number of precautions in addition, like that of tearing up the leaves they have used for drinking water from creeks.